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ABSTRACT

The description of an international business major in a small liberal arts college outlines the program's development and the degree requirements as they have changed since its inception in 1977. In this process, foreign languages have become an integral part of the program design, reinforcing its value in the minds of faculty advisers as well as students. An advanced composition and conversation course focusing entirely on business has resulted. This course places considerable emphasis on vocabulary building, the function and composition of business documents, and the potential role of the foreign language skills after graduation. The program's major advantages include its flexibility, use of college-wide resources, the cooperative spirit developed between the departments, joint student advising, the high caliber of students participating, increased number of foreign language courses as well as courses in international and comparative economics, shared faculty and student interests in extracurricular activities, and increased job opportunities for the program's participants. (MSE)

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THE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MAJOR: A BASIS FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND BUSINESS IN A LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE

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TITLE: THE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MAJOR: A BASIS FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN BETWEEN FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND BUSINESS IN A LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE

I. OVERVIEW OF THE INSTITUTION, A LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE

Elmhurst College is located in a western suburb of Chicago. Founded in 1871, it now is one of the largest liberal arts colleges in Illinois. Our day session enrollment is over 1,800 with an additional 1,500 students in continuing education and the evening session. Elmhurst offers a wide range of academic programs. There are 104 faculty members in twenty-one departments offering over fifty majors. Whereas Elmhurst College offers the traditional liberal arts majors and pre-professional training for teaching, law, and medicine, in recent years the most significant growth has occurred in the fields of Business Administration, Nursing, and Computer Science. Elmhurst College offers the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Bachelor of Music degrees.

II. PAST AND PRESENT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DEPARTMENTS, THE CENTER FOR BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

The International Business Major at Elmhurst College began in 1977. In 1976 the college wide foreign language requirement was deleted. The new major in International Business that was instituted the following year had as one of its requirements a foreign language component equivalent to two academic years of a foreign language. Other academic requirements are listed below.

1977-79 Catalog Listing

Requirements for a major in International Business are:
Bus. 215 - Principles of Marketing
Bus. 221 - Financial Accounting
Bus. 222 - Management Accounting
Bus. 225 - Principles of Data Processing
Bus. 313 - Theory of Organization & Management
Bus. 340 - Business Law
Bus. 430 - Business Finance
Bus. 438 - International Marketing
Pol. Sci. 301 - Comparative Government
Econ. 211 - Introduction to Economics I
Econ. 212 - Introduction to Economics II
Econ. 305 - International Economics
Econ. 309 - Comparative Economic Systems
Math. 162 - Math for the Social Sciences (or equiv.)
Math. 345 - Elementary Statistics, or
Bus. 347 - Business Statistics
At least three courses from the following:
History 303, 345, 363, 444
Political Science 302, 306
Geography 211, 212, 412, 413
Proficiency equivalent to two academic years of a foreign

language is required.

The Director of the Center for Business and Economics had a direct interest in international business and the composition of the major reflected both his interest in this area and his commitment to the integration of business with a strong liberal arts background including proficiency in a foreign language.

In 1979, the Center for Business and Economics hired a new Director and embarked on a series of catalog revisions. The department, as a whole, moved toward a core curriculum of business courses for all majors. Specialty areas were designed that required the core courses plus specified courses for each specialized major. The revision in the International Business area took the form of dropping the language requirements except for students desiring to specialize in one region. No specific courses were listed for this regional fluency requirement. The determination was on an individual basis by the Department of Foreign Languages. In looking at the requirements listed below, one notes less choice outside the business major is given to students. No courses in geography may now count for the major and the foreign language requirement is eliminated. These changes make the major less interdisciplinary in nature. Note that the business requirements in the listing of the major below are identical to those in the 1977 catalog. catalog.

1979-81 Catalog Listing

International Business - A student specializing in International Business is not required to take the core curriculum. He/she must take the following courses in the manner specified below:

Bus. 230 - Principles of Marketing
Bus. 250 - Management Theory
Bus. 261 - Financial Accounting
Bus. 262 - Management Accounting
Bus. 339 - International Marketing
Bus. 340 - Business Finance
Eco. 211 - Economics I
Eco. 212 - Economics II
Eco. 314 - International Economics or
Bus. 442 - International Finance
Eco. 316 - Comparative Economic Systems or
Pol. Sci. 301 - Comparative Government
Math. 345 - Elementary Statistics
Hist. 303 - American Foreign Relations
Pol. Sci. 306 - International Politics

Regional Studies - In addition to the Basic Curriculum outlined above, it is recommended that a student develop a regional specialization.

A student choosing a regional specialty must attain written and oral fluency in a major language of their choosing. The Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures shall determine how fluency can be obtained for the individual or if the individual already is fluent. No specific course requirements, therefore, are appropriate.

Regions which can be studied include:

A. Latin America (Spanish): See Latin American Area Studies presently offered.
B. Soviet Union (Russian)
   1. Geo. 211 or 212 Regional Study
   2. Geo. 313 Geography of Soviet Union
   3. Hist. 363 History of Russia
   4. Pol. Sci. 302 Modern Foreign Governments
C. Western Europe (French or German)
   1. Pol. Sci. 302 Modern Foreign Governments
   2. Hist. 443 History of Europe: 1815 to the Eve of WWI
   3. Hist. 444 The World in the Twentieth Century
   4. Geo. 311 Geography of Europe
   5. Geo. 211 or 212 Regional Study
D. Asia (Chinese or Japanese)
   1. Pol. Sci. 302 Modern Foreign Governments
   2. Geo. 111 or 112 Regional Study
   3. Hist. 364 History of the Far East
   4. Theo. 333 World Religions

Interim courses offered as regional studies also are recommended.

The 1981 catalog revision produced no real changes in the structure of the International Business Major. The regional majors were delineated to indicate suggested courses for different regions: Asia, Western Europe, the Soviet Union and Latin America. These regions were chosen to reflect clusters of courses pertaining to these areas from various academic disciplines across the college-wide curriculum. The foreign language requirement is not reinstated for the general major and the requirement of fluency is retained for the regional areas. However, for the first time, German 305, Spanish 305 or French 305 are recommended as specific courses. These courses are Business German, Business Spanish and Business French at the upper level. They presume three years of college level instruction as their prerequisites.

1981-83 Catalog Listing

Requirements for a major in International Business:
A student specializing in International Business is not required to take the core curriculum. He/she must take the following courses in the manner specified below:

Bus. 230 - Principles of Marketing
Bus. 250 - Management Theory
Bus. 261 - Financial Accounting
Bus. 262 - Management Accounting
Bus. 339 - International Marketing
Bus. 340 - Business Finance
Eco. 211 - Introduction to Macroeconomics
Eco. 212 - Introduction to Microeconomics
Eco. 314 - International Economics or

Bus. 443 - International Finance
Eco. 316 - Comparative Economic Systems or
Pol. Sci. 301 - Comparative Government
Math. 345 - Elementary Statistics
His. 303 - American Foreign Relations
Pol. 306 - International Politics

Regional Studies - In addition to the International Business Curriculum outlined above, it is recommended that a student develop a regional specialization.

A student choosing a regional specialty must attain written and oral fluency in a major language of their choosing. The Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures shall determine how fluency can be obtained for the individual or if the individual already is fluent. No specific course requirements, therefore, are appropriate, although German 305, Spanish 305 or French 305 are recommended.

Regions which can be studied include:
A. Latin America (Spanish): See Latin American Area Studies presently offered.
B. Soviet Union (Russian)
   1. Geo. 111 or 112 Regional Study
   2. Geo. 313 Geography of Soviet Union
   3. His. 363 History of Russia
   4. Pol. 302 Modern Foreign Governments
C. Western Europe (French or German)
   1. Pol. 302 Modern Foreign Governments
   2. His. 443 History of Europe: 1815 to the Eve of WWI
   3. His. 444 The World in the Twentieth Century
   4. Geo. 311 Geography of Europe
   5. Geo. 111 or 112 Regional Study
D. Asia (Chinese or Japanese)
   1. Pol. Sci. 302 Modern Foreign Governments
   2. Geo. 111 or 112 Regional Study
   3. his. 364 History of the Far East
   4. Thl. 333 World Religions

Interim courses offered as regional studies also are recommended when appropriate.

In 1983, the catalog was again revised and the International Business Major revamped. The new major was strengthened in terms of the business coursework, in terms of its interdisciplinary nature and by the reintroduction of a foreign language requirement. The requirements are listed below:

1983-85 Catalog Listing

Requirements for a major in International Business:
A student specializing in International Business, an interdepartmental major, must take five courses from a list of electives available

from the International Business advisor in the Center for Business and Economics in addition to the core curriculum. The elective courses include catalog offerings in Business, Economics, Geography, History, Modern Languages, Political Science, Speech Communication and Theology. Appropriate special offerings in Interim also may be selected with the approval of the advisor. Students selecting this major must have a minor in a foreign language of their choice or equivalent competency recognized by the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. It is essential for students in this major to work closely with the International Business advisor in the Center for Business and Economics.

1. Required - Economics 314 - International Economics
2. Required - Foreign Language - (Select one - Presumes a minor in a foreign language)
   - Spn. 305 - Business Spanish
   - Frn. 305 - Business French
   - Grm. 305 - Business German
3. Select three from the following groups:
   - A. Eco. 316 - Comparative Economic Systems or
     Pol. Sci. 301 - Comparative Political Systems or
     Pol. Sci. 302 - Modern Foreign Government
   - B. His. 303 - U. S. Dip. History or
     Pol. Sci. 306 - International Politics
   - C. Thl. 333 - World Religions or
     Thl. 334 - World Religions
   - D. Geo. 375 - Geography and International Relations or
     Geo. 412 - Political Geography
     Geo. 413 - Economic Geography
   - E. Spc. 315 - Intercultural Communication

Required CORE CURRICULUM

Bus. 220 - Introduction to Data Processing or
Bus. 224 - Introduction to Computer Programming
Bus. 230 - Principles of Marketing
Bus. 250 - Management Theory
Bus. 261 - Financial Accounting
Bus. 262 - Management Accounting or
Bus. 361 - Intermediate Accounting I
Bus. 340 - Business Finance
Bus. 456 - Business Policy
Eco. 211 - Economics I - Introduction to Macroeconomics
Eco. 212 - Economics II - Introduction to Microeconomics
Math 151 - Calculus I or
Math 162 - Math for the Social Sciences
Math 345 - Elementary Statistics

Note the requirement of three years of college level foreign language with a course in Business Spanish, Business French or Business German as the capstone course. The interdisciplinary nature is strengthened and broadened in terms of the number of departments in which a student may choose an elective. Speech, Geography, and Theology have been added to the list. The number of courses offered as elective choices has been increased, and the regional study concept has been eliminated as a formal option. This elimination was done because of the time restraint imposed by the four-year sequence of

studies. With the help of their advisor, students may still choose electives for general college distribution requirements that will offer greater specialization in one regional area if they so desire. However, the major is now intended to provide a broad general background in business, fluency in one language and a general background in other disciplines as they relate to the international aspects of business.

III. THE ROLE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES, THE FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT, FOREIGN LANGUAGE FOR BUSINESS COURSES AND THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE FACULTY IN THE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS PROGRAM

The role of the Department of Foreign Languages has evolved considerably over the past decade. In 1976, the foreign language requirement was dropped and replaced by a new Language and Thought requirement. Few students majored in foreign languages and still fewer pursued the traditional teaching career. At the same time, a growing number chose double majors which combined foreign languages with political science, psychology, sociology or business administration.

Whereas our upper level students found the language, civilization, and literature courses challenging and enriching, they frequently requested a course more directly related to skills for jobs in business. Thus, after considerable debate within our department, it was determined that we should initiate one-semester business language courses in French, German and Spanish beginning in 1981.

We now have five years experience teaching such classes. The courses are at the advanced level with third-year college composition and conversation as prerequisite. Thus, we assume that students with language skills already highly developed can concentrate on those areas specifically related to business language. We also have developed courses suited to the expertise of our foreign language faculty, i.e., dealing with the language of business and with general business practices abroad. We are well aware of the expertise of our colleagues in the Center for Business and Economics and do not intend to compete with them.

What has evolved over these past five years is an advanced conversation and composition course which focuses entirely on business. Considerable emphasis is placed on vocabulary building and on the function and composition of business documents.

A second goal of the class is to provide participants with a realistic view of how they might use their language skills following graduation. Prior to the course, most students think only in terms of employment in the United Nations, translating firms, international airlines or multinational corporations. Few students are aware of opportunities in local Chicago firms. Two projects have been initiated to help them gain a broader perspective. During the term, guest lectures are presented by a number of business persons who use foreign languages in their work, including not only international business but also Illinois State government, private service agencies and firms employing minority workers. Students are encouraged to engage in frank discussions with the speakers about the prospects in their fields, as well as the pros and cons of such employment.

The final semester project is to seek out businesses which have either an

international focus or which employ persons who speak a foreign language while at work, to interview a representative of those businesses and to present the findings to the class.

The results of the courses have been quite gratifying. Students have acquired essential vocabulary needed to conduct business in a foreign language; they are acquainted with a wide range of business documents; and they emerge with a feeling of confidence when dealing with a business interview. Most important, they complete the course with a more realistic view of how they might best use their language skills following graduation.

The success of these foreign languages for business courses helped lead to discussions with the Center for Business and Economics about formally integrating foreign languages back into the International Business curriculum. Since 1983, a minor in foreign languages that specifically includes the foreign language for business courses is required for all International Business majors at Elmhurst College. The foreign language for business courses have become the capstone of the language component of the International Business Major.

IV. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE CURRENT MAJOR ON INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND THE COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOREIGN LANGUAGE/HUMANITIES AND THE CENTER FOR BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the current program? Eight advantages are apparent to us:

1. Flexibility:
   The present system allows considerably more flexibility in choosing courses than in the past. Students currently majoring in International Business may elect from eleven courses in six different departments in addition to the core curriculum.

2. College Wide Resources:
   This major taps other resources of the college. The International Business Major builds on a strong liberal arts background with contributions from the Departments of Foreign Languages, Political Science, History, Theology, Geography and Speech.

3. Cooperative Spirit:
   A cooperative spirit has developed between the Center for Business and Economics and the Department of Foreign Languages. Shared interests and physical proximity of our offices have allowed for frequent interaction and discussion between faculty members. We have developed a greater degree of empathy for the concerns and problems confronting our respective disciplines and a greater appreciation for the contributions of each department to the education of our International Business Majors. The result is increased collegiality not only among faculty members in our two departments, but also among colleagues in business and the humanities in general.

4. Joint Advising of Students:

Advisors in the Center for Business and Economics and the Department of Foreign Languages counsel International Business majors, thus reinforcing in the student's mind the integral role of the Department of Foreign Languages in their major field. The physical proximity of the departments on the same floor helps foster this cooperative advising program.

5. High Caliber of Students:
The caliber of International Business students is higher than in the past. Because of its increased rigor, the International Business major attracts above average students who wish to combine skills in business, foreign languages and the humanities.

6. Increased Enrollments:
Increased enrollments have generally occurred in foreign language courses in the international and comparative economics courses. Students appear to be attracted to a more rigorous structured program.

7. Shared Extracurricular Activities:
The shared interest in a common goal extends outside our classrooms. Students and faculty from several disciplines support extracurricular activities related to international affairs. Next week, for example, we shall accompany twenty-five Juniors and Seniors to the Student Conference on International Business, sponsored by The Chicago World Trade Conference.

8. Increased Job Opportunities:
Majoring in International Business affords additional employment opportunities for Foreign Language majors and broader opportunities for Business majors who wish to sharpen or learn language skills in addition to their general background in business. The identification of foreign languages with business has led to unexpected benefits for our students. For example, when international airlines at O'Hare Airport call the College Placement office for part-time ground hostesses, the Department of Foreign Languages is contacted for candidates. Presently, four Elmhurst College students work for Swissair; two of whom were sent to Zurich last Spring for special training.

We have observed very few disadvantages to our program. Our wish list includes field experiences and internships in fields requiring the use of foreign languages. We also recognize that only one foreign language for business course is a minimal requirement, and we hope to increase our offerings in the future. Additionally, resource restraint prevents this major from being an option for our evening students. Day transfer students without a strong language preparation may not find it possible to complete the major in four academic years. However, these disadvantages are far outweighed by the advantages afforded by the International Business major.

V. CONCLUSION:

As a result of the cooperation between our two departments, foreign languages has become integrated into the International Business major. Because we fully share the academic advising responsibilities with our colleagues in the Center for Business and Economics, the significance of foreign languages for the curriculum has become reinforced in the minds

of our advisees. Professor Sampsell and I confer several times each week, and I believe that these discussions have given both of us a greater understanding of both disciplines. Most of all - we enjoy it!